

CASTLEMAINE NATURALIST

May 1993

#189 Vol 17.4

SANDON IN MARCH 1993

Drinking at the bird bath were

Crimson Rosellas	Yellow Thornbills
Scarlet Robin (pair)	Striated Thornbills
Grey Shrike-thrush (pair)	White-throated Treecreeper (p)
Grey Fantail (pair)	Yellow-faced Honeyeaters
Wrens	White-eared Honeyeaters
Brown Thornbills	Fuscous Honeyeaters
Buff-rumped Thornbills	White-plumed Honeyeaters

Brown-headed Honeyeaters
White-naped Honeyeaters
Spotted Pardalotes
Striated Pardalotes
Silvereyes
Magpies
Grey Currawong (pair)

Birds seen on the property were

Australasian Grebe (pair in breeding plumage)	Kookaburras
Little Pied Cormorant	Welcome Swallows
White-faced Heron	Richard's Pipit
Brown Falcon (pair)	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike
Masked Lapwings	Jacky Winter (pair)
Galahs	Rufous Whistler (pair)
Eastern Rosellas	Restless Flycatcher (pair)
Southern Boobook Owl (h)	Willie Wagtail
Owlet Nightjar	Speckled Warbler (pair)

Weebill (pair nesting in red box, 1 m from ground)
Yellow-rumped Thornbill
Varied Sittellas
Red Wattlebirds
Yellow-tufted Honeyeaters
Diamond Firetail (pair)
White-winged Choughs
Australian Magpie Lark
Australian Ravens.

Susanna Starr.

THE B.O.C. EASTER CAMP

The B.O.C. Easter camp of 1993 was set on the banks of the Murray just near Moama in southern N.S.W.. One Hundred and thirty birdos were spread through the Redgums, learning to hear birdcalls over the roar of the speedboats tearing up and down the river.

Despite this noise during the day the birdos, just about the hardiest of campers, persevered and enjoyed the camp in generally good weather.

A large contingent joined John Hosford, a local birdwatcher with extensive knowledge of the area, and toured the riverine forests and nearby Box woodlands and Murray pine sandhills between Mathoura and Gulpa Island. We saw plenty of dry-country birds such as Whitefaces, Diamond Firetails, Chestnut-rumped Thornbills, Peaceful Doves, Red-capped Robins as well as



White Cypress Pine

Yellow Rosellas, a flock of Blue-winged Parrots and, when travelling, Cattle Egrets, Darters and raptors including Forktailed Kites.

The Bird Call Circle was very large indeed, and the united "ins" and "out"s, (indicating whether birds had been seen in walking distance or out of walking distance of the camp) for many of the more common birds must have left the campers on the other side of the river wondering what the heck was going on over on our side!

The highlight of the trip for many was the journey to Deniliquin to meet bird tour organiser, Philip Maher, to see Box woodlands and swamps around the area. At the first stop Superb Parrots were seen at close quarters, as well as Blue-faced Honeyeaters. The lunch stop in a Black Box woodland was full of Western Warblers, and many of the dry country birds already seen. The swamps we visited near Deniliquin had many interesting birds and the nearby paddocks were full (and I mean full) of herons, cormorants, ibis and others.

Interesting birds here were Zebra Finches on fences, a Pied Butcherbird, Bluebonnets near one swamp, a Cisticola which Philip spotted from the car window, a Marsh Harrier and, at one wetland, White-breasted Woodswallows, Black-banded Dotterels and one Red-kneed Dotterel. These are just ones I saw. The rest of the troop went on and saw Pink-eared Ducks and Black-tailed Native Hens. That night a small group who went out with Philip saw Red-chested Button-quail and a Plains Wanderer with 4 chicks.

At the camping area Boobook owls and Tawny Frogmouths sat in the trees, and showed little concern for the large flocks of *Ornithologus Observis Australis* (bug-eyed or obsessive variety), moving around their territory. (A Boobook actually landed across the track among the tall saplings opposite our camp just on dusk while we were eating our meal, and stayed there for about 15 minutes, despite all the attention it got. R.M.) The mascot bird of the camp which succeeded the Red-capped Robin of the 1992 camp at Wyperfeld, would have to have been the Great Crested Grebe, a brave individual which was seen on the river many times, artfully dodging the speedboats.

My frenzied dash around the camp talking of this Great Crested Grebe on the river was met by "Oh, it's still there, is it?" and "Yes, I saw it this morning" and so on. Yes, it was pretty silly of me to think that a Great Crested Grebe would escape 130 pairs of binoculars by 4 o'clock in the afternoon.

Simon Kennedy.

THE FIELD NATURALISTS CLUBS ASSOCIATIONS.

The Timboon Field Naturalists Club has given notice of motion "That the WVFNCA merge with the VFNCA". The motion is to be discussed at the annual meeting in October at Mt Arapiles.

There are two Field Naturalists Clubs Associations in Victoria.

The Western Victoria Field Naturalists Clubs Association (the WVFNCA) is the older, and has been in operation for 33 years. It has member clubs from western Victoria and near-by interstate districts (like Mt Gambier). The WVFNCA meets three times a year. These meetings, called campouts, are on the long weekend in March (a joint meeting with the VFNCA), in early spring and in mid spring. A typical meeting has Saturday excursions, a meeting in the early evening (at about 6.30 pm), and an evening address. Excursions are also held on the Sunday, and for a long weekend, on the Monday. The program typically ends at lunch time or in the early afternoon of the final day. Sometimes programs are also held on the Friday evening.

Why have an association?

- a. Campouts give an opportunity for members of Field Naturalists Clubs to meet and exchange ideas. This is alone is reason enough to keep an association in operation.
- b. Campouts give an opportunity to see more of our country, and visit localities with expert guides. Often such localities would not be known to, or be accessible to, the casual visitor.
- c. The WVFNCA has been active in conservation matters. However, a meeting three times a year, and with long gaps between some meetings, makes effective action difficult. There is also only a short time given to the business meeting, and thus only a very short time in which to have a meaningful discussion - those at the meeting are aware that a guest speaker is waiting to begin. The place of field naturalists clubs in conservation has also not been resolved - what is the correct balance between radical-activism and merely providing material to form the basis of informed discussion? Generally, the conservation role of the WVFNCA has diminished over the years, as more active, better organised and more vocal groups have come to the fore. Often these groups are city based, and may not have the knowledge held by the local groups.

Despite these difficulties, the WVFNCA has made some major contributions to conservation. The Beaglehole publications are outstanding examples.

The Victorian Field Naturalists Clubs Association (the VFNCA) is about 20 years old, and is made up of clubs from Victoria. Many of the Western Victorian Clubs also belong to the VFNCA. Its organisation is modelled on the WVFNCA. It meets once a year on the long weekend in March. Like the WVFNCA, it holds its meeting in the early evening.

There are some problems with the VFNCA and its meeting time.

- a. A meeting once a year is quite insufficient for it to have an effective conservation role.

- b. The long distances involved makes attendance expensive, and difficult except for the retired. And travel may include passage through Melbourne.
- c. Many people have other commitments on a holiday weekend. There are major sporting and cultural events, family gatherings and so on. Many of those who do not have commitments are unwilling to travel on the roads during a long weekend. In 1992, a campout was held at The Basin. It was very well organised with an excellent program, and was well advertised, but had a very poor attendance.
- d. Bushland is often very dry in early March, with few flowers. And there is often a fire danger. It may be more difficult for host clubs to provide an interesting program for three days at this time of the year.
- e. Host clubs may, because of the long weekend, have manpower problems. Accommodation is often difficult for a long weekend.

It should be noted that another group, The Field Naturalists Club of Victoria (the FNCV) is more or less like any other club, (and would perhaps be better called the "Melbourne Field Naturalists Club"). It does not have any special role in the Association.

Timboon F.N.C. suggests that the new Field Naturalists Clubs Association should have zones. Western Victoria would make up one of these zones.

The Society for Growing Australian Plants. It is interesting to compare the field naturalists association meetings with those of the Victorian Region of SGAP.

The regional SGAP meetings are held once a quarter, with executive meetings between these times. The location usually alternates between a metropolitan club and a country club. Each club is entitled to one delegate. Meetings begin at 9.30 or 10.00 on the Saturday, and continue until 4.00 pm. These is thus ample time for discussion and follow up. Activities, such as garden visits or bushwalks, are provided for the non-delegates. There is an outing, such as a garden visit, after the meeting concludes, and an evening address. On Sunday an outing is held. This might be to gardens, bushland, or a revegetation project.

The SGAP actively encourages the formation of new clubs, and provides financial support. This includes assistance towards incorporation. There have been five new groups formed since March, 1990. Several more are in the process of formation. When did we last have a new Field Naturalists Club? The Victorian SGAP also produces a quarterly newsletter. Many clubs exchange the newsletters at the quarterly meetings.

The future It would be difficult to make sound decisions about our future until we are clear about what we the role of the Association should be.

We need to decide what kind of association we want. What should its purpose(s) be? And in particular, what should its role be in conservation?

The motion from Timboon is opportune. It is time we reviewed the operation of the WVNCA and the VFNCA.

A quote the Timboon F.N.C. "The field naturalist movement deserves better ... we hope for the support of all clubs, and the enthusiasm to make a new look Association which will serve us well."

E. Perkins.

MT TERRICK TERRICK

Terrick Terrick State Park is a 2500 ha (25 sq km) reserve, and is notable for its White Cypress Pine. The granite outcrops give fine views, and also support a distinctive flora.

The park has the most significant stand of White Cypress Pine (*Callitris glaucophylla*, formerly *C. columellaris*) in Victoria. The species is slow growing, and most of the trees in the park are over 100 years old. It is thought that the current forest is a result of germination following a fire in the latter part of last century. There is considerable colour variation in the foliage of this species.

Slender Cypress Pine (*C. preissii*) has also been recorded from the park. It differs from White Cypress Pine in that it has thick cone-scales which are often tuberculate. Slender Cypress Pine has thin scales, which separate almost to the base, and the cones are never tuberculate.

Yellow box (*Eucalyptus melliodora*) is the most common eucalypt. Most are smooth-barked on the upper part, and here may resemble red gums. Grey Box (*E. microcarpa*) is also quite common.

Some of the common plants of the granite outcrops are Nodding Blue Lily (*Stypandra glauca*), Deane's Wattle (*Acacia paucijuga ssp deanei*), Snowy Mint-bush (*Prostanthera nivea*) and Rock Correa (*Correa glabra*).

Other notable plants are

Pimelea Daisy-bush (*Olearia pimeleoides*). There is a dense patch west of the picnic area. This shrubby daisy makes a fine show in spring.

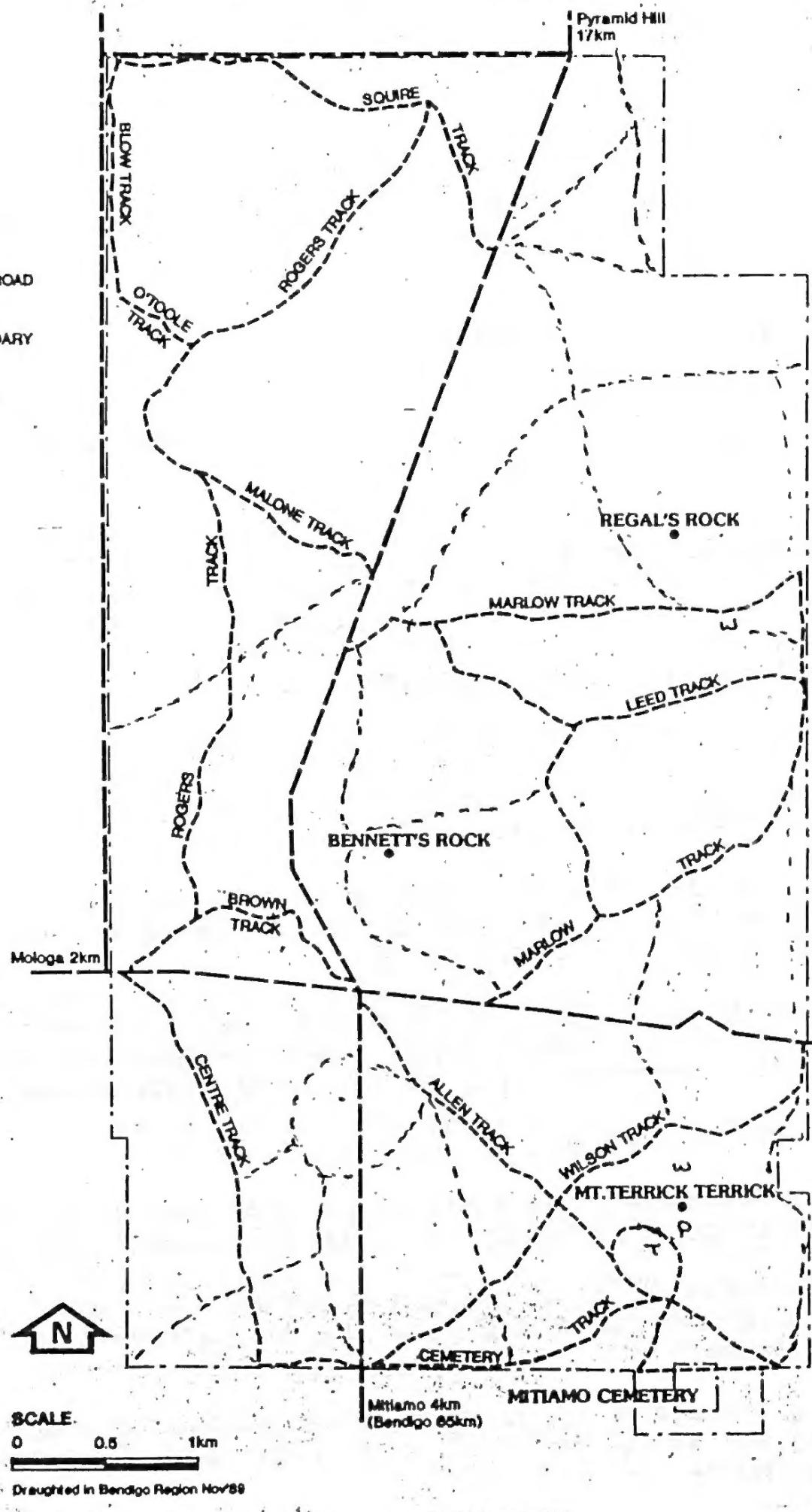
Hooked Needlewood (*Hakea tephrosperma*, formerly *H. vittata*). There is a small patch near the entrance road. Like our Silky Hakea, it has needle-shaped leaves.

Weeping Pittosporum (*Pittosporum phillyreoides*). There are several of these plants to the south-west of the picnic area. There are some good stands elsewhere in the forest.

TERRICK TERRICK STATE PARK

LEGEND

- UNSEALED ROAD
- - - TRACK
- - - PARK BOUNDARY
- P T TOILETS
- P PICNIC AREA
- P FIREPLACE
- LOOKOUT
- Other track



Buloke (*Allocasuarina luehmannii*) and Drooping Sheoak (*A. verticillata*) have also been recorded.

West of the main lookout some rock pools are to be found. Some have Swamp Lily (*Ottelia ovalifolia*). Duckweed can sometimes be found in the pools.

Mistletoes are fairly abundant, particularly on Deane's Wattle. The three species recorded are Grey Mistletoe (*Amyema quandang*) and Harlequin Mistletoe (*Lysiana exocarpi*) on the wattles, and Buloke Mistletoe (*Amyema linophyllum*).

Other plants recorded for the park, but which I have not seen here, include Desert Cassia (*Senna artemisioides*, formerly *Cassia nemophila*), Berrigan Emu-bush (*Eremophila longifolia*), Hairy Tails (*Ptilotus erubescens*), Lamb-tails (*P. exaltatus*), Feather-heads (*P. macrocephalus*) and Pussy-tails (*P. spathulatus*), Uncommon ferns recorded for the park are Woolly Cloak-fern (*Cheilanthes lasiophylla*), Bristly Cloak-fern (*C. distans*), Austral Adder's Tongue (*Ophioglossum lusitanicum*) and Plain Quillwort (*Isoetes drummondii*).

The map is based on a map by C & NR. The C & NR map shows only a few of the roads.

The picnic area is a good spot from which to explore the surrounding area. Suggested activities are a walk through some of the cypress pine forest, a climb to the lookout, and walk around the lookout rock.

Birds are usually abundant. Brown Treecreepers would probably be the most common bird. White-plumed Honeyeaters are common in the yellow box near the picnic ground. Birds that are often seen include Peaceful Doves, Mallee Ringnecks, Red-capped Robins, Hooded Robins and White-face. Gilbert Whistlers may also be present.

E.P.

OBSERVATIONS

NANKEEN NIGHT HERONS. An adult and a juvenile have been seen at Lake Joanna, Castlemaine Botanic Gardens.

SOUTHERN BOOBOKS. A pair have been seen again, in the Botanic Gardens, in the same place as last year. (SP)

Subscriptions 1993 Subscriptions were due in February.

Single \$12, Family \$18, Student/pensioner \$8, Supporting member \$20
Newsletter posted: subscription plus \$6.

Supper: May: B Maund and M Willis.

Castlemaine Field Naturalists Club inc. PO Box 324, Castlemaine 3450.

CASTLEMAINE F.N.C. PROGRAM

Excursions leave promptly at the times indicated.

Fri 14 May. HELEN ASTON "JOYS OF THE CANNING STOCK ROUTE." 8.00 pm at Lawson Hall, High School.

Sat 15 May. TERRICK TERRICK. All day excursion. Meet 27 Doveton St at 10.00 am. Route via Eaglehawk Town Hall and Mitiamo. Leader: E Perkins. This is a joint excursion with the Southern Riverina F.N.C.

Thurs 20 May. BIRDWATCHING. Joint CFNC/U3A birdwatching outing. Meet Cont Ed car park, Templeton St at 9.30 am. Leader: E. Perkins.

Thurs 24 May. BUSINESS MEETING. 7.30 pm at 38 Campbell St.

Fri 11 June. ECOLOGY OF BOX-IRONBARK WOODLAND. Speaker is Doug Robinson. High School at 8.00 pm.

Sat 12 June. WERONA CEMETERY. 1.30 pm at SEC, Mostyn St. Leader: K Turner.

Thurs 17 June. BIRDWATCHING. Joint CFNC/U3A birdwatching outing. Meet Cont Ed car park, Templeton St at 9.30 am. Leader: K Turner.

Fri 9 July. WADERS OF AUSTRALIA AND OVERSEAS. Speaker is Mark Barter. 8 pm at High School.

Sat 10 July. WINTER WATERBIRDS. Excursion.

Thurs 15 July. BIRDWATCHING. Joint CFNC/U3A birdwatching outing. Meet Cont Ed car park, Templeton St at 9.30 am. Leader: M Oliver.

Fri Aug 13. J & M. CALDER. Topic to be announced.

Aug 13-15 BARMAH CAMPOUT. Meeting of WVFNCA at Dharya Centre, Barmah. Bunkhouse accommodation with 2,4 or 6 persons/room. Note changed date.

Fri Oct 8 PAT BINGHAM "BIRD HABITAT - HOW YOU KNOW YOU HAVE GOT IT". High School at 8.00 pm.

Fri 9 Nov. ROB WATKINS "NATURAL HISTORY IN THE EYES OF A PHOTOGRAPHER" High School at 8.00 pm.

Spring STIEGLITZ WILDFLOWERS

COMMITTEE: B Maund (Pres), B Envall (VP), M Oliver (Sec), G Broadway (Treas), K Turner (Prog), R Mills (PO & asst N/L), E. Perkins (N/L ed), S Parnaby, C Morris and K Meehan.